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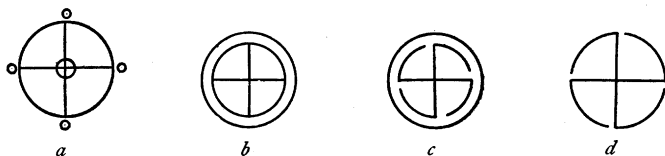
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OBSERVATIONS RELATIVE TO THE ORIGIN OF THE FYLFOT OR SWASTIKA

By FRANK HAMILTON CUSHING¹

While studying the pictographic designs representing games of the ancient Mexicans, I was struck by the symbol which stood for the world and the four quarters, according to which all arrow games or diagram games derived from them were played. This consisted of a circle enclosing a simple cross (see figure *a*). Oppo-

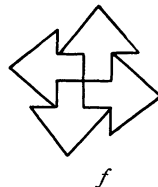
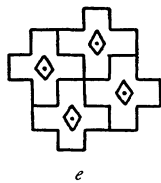


site the four extremities of the cross, however, were little circular dots each of a different color, leaving no question as to the significance of the enclosed cross as that of the four directions, or the plane of this world. This latter was further shown by a slightly larger dot or circle, *parti-colored*, and placed in the center of the circle at the intersection of the cross as the synthesis of the four regions represented by the external dots as the "all in one." Among the Navajos the world and the four directions as one are represented in an identical manner, although no dots are used, but a double circle is sometimes drawn (*b*). This is especially the case when the figure is drawn as a sacred diagram. A very significant variant of this is sometimes to be observed in which the points

¹ These notes, from an incomplete and unpublished lecture by the late Frank Hamilton Cushing, together with the accompanying "shield-making prayer of a Priest of the Bow" of the Zuñi Indians, are kindly furnished the *American Anthropologist* by Mrs Cushing. The notes were probably not designed by their author for publication in their present form, but for obvious reasons are here given without change. The prayer, so significant as showing the origin of the fylfot or swastika at least among the Zuñi, was written down by Mr Cushing both in the language of that tribe and in translation. Each is given in facsimile. The totem at the bottom of the original is the *ténatsali* flower, Ténatsali being Mr Cushing's Zuñi name. — EDITOR.

where the arms of the cross join the inner circle are broken off at one side (*c*). Yet further, amongst the Pimas of Arizona the symbol of the four winds is made singly by leaving off the outer circle of this diagram and employing merely the cross with the four curved arms (*d*). This figure is common throughout ancient America, from Ohio to the ruins of Yucatan and the Andes. In a few instances the cross with these curved arms becomes the true swastika, as among some of the pictographs of the Southwest; and my observations of varieties of these have led me, in connection with the known meanings of the Mexican, Navajo, and Pima diagrams, to the conclusion that the right-angle swastika, so to call it, was primarily the representation of the circle of the four Wind-gods standing at the heads of their "trails" or directions, but necessarily represented at right angles to these trails in order to distinguish them therefrom. In the light of this observation, the open spaces in the inner circle of the Navajo, and the broken circle of the Pima diagram, become conceivable as the gateways of the winds, thus symbolizing not only the world and the four quarters, but also the winds of the four directions, all in one figure. That the true swastika of the Orient and the gammadion of Europe and their many variants (which I have since made study of) had practically the same genesis as these early American forms seems to admit of little doubt.

The examination of the Zuñi gammadio-form arrangement of the four sacred ancient spaces or terraces of the gods (of the four directions, see figure *e*) and of the ancient Finnish fylfot-arrow symbol



of the thunderbolt (of all directions, see figure *f*) would seem to add so much evidence to this conception of the original meaning of the swastika that further research seems desirable.

The peculiar form of this symbol of the world and the two or

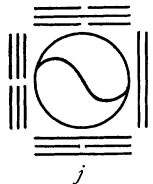
four directions or quarters in it used in games, divinations, and the heraldry of China, Japan, and Korea, in which the arms of the enclosed cross are double-curved (*g*), is but another variety of this



swastika, of which I also observed beginnings in the Mexican pictographs representing the celebrated mantle of the five roses on which the sacred game of pachisi was customarily played (*h*). It is probable however that this figure, as apart from the simpler region symbol, was developed both in Mexico and in the Orient in connection with cane (arrow) games, a section of a cane or reed at one of



its joints (*i*) representing the highest or all count (as well as all the four quarters and their synthesis), whilst the cane divided into four slips stood for the four quarters apart, each counting according to the quarter it was marked for and conformed to, as in the symbol of the four directions and the world within them seen on Chinese compasses and on the national flag of Korea (*j*).



Aiyalanashkya Tenen peneve
Pitten Pittem ene

Search!

My Götter, Beasts Gods all!
 How ever many be the foe
 make prisoners ye and shelter me
 Where'er I go!

Let not from whatever way
 By what ever means
 The enemy wherever they
 assail the way!

His big dogs
 So—shelter me—

That never-sing enemy
 May win to me—

So-shelter me—

Oh long-tailed lion of the gleaming North
 Oh Palace robed in sun of the gleaming West
 Oh fiery wildcat of the gleaming South
 Oh wolf grey-eared, of the gleaming East
 Oh Kish winged being of the Overworld
 Oh tree of life—

So-shield thy tenant

And so encompass me—

Yours faithfully

W. C. Cushing

Unsent it.

The Shield-making Prayer.

Sik: *Prayer of a*
Prayer of the Dow

Hom-Hitachuk, Kyapim-Hrav;

Keivi Bnakuv pekh-Tapet

Hom Tchinanawé, Hom Aiyalanawé.

Hom Tchanti.

Emel Telikewente

Motot Jethua inakewé

Kwahotul Akyani,

Homnanaweminyena.

Kikya yáttone

Hom Tchinanawé

Emel Telikewente

Spikwainam-tun Akyani,

Hom-ton Aiyalanawé

Hotot Tachahana, Pechli Tachahana

Siucha wéwina, Kyakishi Telikewé

Pépi chashá, Nakhon alahaká

Yinawi Kharisik Jema etat Koa

Akheia Ktopé Oyama Nkhonakia

Hom-ta-mé,

Hom ikeina Aiyalanawé

Hom ta hom ita withkenakya—

Hom Tchinanawé

Hom Tchanti